



Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Brief on Paraprofessionals Viewing Student's Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and Attending Program and Placement Team (PPT) Meetings

The CSDE regularly receives questions regarding confidentiality and the appropriateness of paraprofessionals viewing student's IEPs and attending IEP Team Meetings. The purpose of this article is to clarify the "myth" surrounding confidentiality of certain student information and inform public school districts of their responsibilities under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Where a paraprofessional supports a child eligible for special education, it is important that the paraprofessional understand what is expected of them within the context of the implementation of the child's IEP. Access to the child's IEP is one means of achieving this familiarity with the services included in the child's IEP and understanding the role of the paraprofessional in the implementation of the child's IEP. Disclosure of information from the child's IEP by the supervising teacher and other staff working with the child would also be appropriate. Each child's record has an access sheet included in the front of the individual record. If a staff member accesses the child's record, they must sign in on the access form indicating the reason they are accessing the child's record.

This law affects the role of the paraprofessional who works or has access to confidential information. Information about a student is confidential and should only be shared with teachers and staff who work directly with the student. Paraprofessionals who type, collect and store education records need to be aware that the written data is confidential and should not be shared with persons outside the educational team.

Paraprofessionals are neither required members of the IEP team under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) nor are paraprofessionals required members of the state defined planning and placement team. Although the IDEA says "the IEP team for each child with a disability includes...at the discretion of the parent or school district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child...", the paraprofessional is employed by the school district and the school district will determine whether it is appropriate or feasible for the paraprofessional to attend the child's IEP team meeting just as the district determines the appropriate staff members generally for the child's IEP team meeting.

It is important that district or school personnel explain their policy on the attendance of paraprofessionals at PPTs to both parents and schools staff. If a paraprofessional is required on the IEP and not attending a student's PPT meeting; it is the responsibility of the student's teacher and the paraprofessional's supervisor to communicate in detail with the paraprofessionals about the student, before the IEP team meeting (Connecticut Guidelines, p. 29).

Resources

Connecticut State Department of Education (2012). Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals, Hartford, CT: Author

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/guidelines_paraprofessionals.pdf

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

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